

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Holmdel Township Board of Education defines information technology to be the access to information on district-owned hardware through the use of various media such as voice, video and data. The Board believes that contemporary society presents unique challenges and opportunities for the individual. The proliferation of information technology in daily life must be accessed and utilized to assist each student in meeting these challenges and taking advantages of the opportunities.

The Board believes that an effective educational program incorporates technology as an essential component and reflects current technological advantages in both available resources and training.

The Board further believes that information technology has a critical impact on the manner through which individuals communicate, access information, resolve issues and creatively meet individual and collective educational needs.

Information technology provides the tools to extend and enhance the instructional process for students and staff in all curriculum areas. Education, from kindergarten through twelfth grade in the Holmdel Township Public Schools, must challenge and expand the vision of all students and ensure that they can demonstrate their skills to compete in a technological environment.

The Holmdel Township Board of Education recognizes that telecommunications, electronic information sources and networked services significantly alter the information landscape for schools by opening classrooms to an extensive array of resources. However, telecommunications, because they may lead to any publicly available fileservers in the world, will open classrooms to electronic information resources, which have not been screened by educators for use by students of various ages. The Holmdel Township Public Schools will utilize such software and hardware filters as available and practical to screen the electronic resources to attempt to ensure that they are consistent with the Board-approved curriculum and developmentally appropriate for the children using them.

The Board expects that all employees will learn to use electronic mail and telecommunications tools and apply them in appropriate ways to the performance of tasks associated with their positions and assignments. Toward that end, the Board directs the Superintendent to provide staff with training in the proper and effective use of informational technology within the instructional program.

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The Board expects instructional and administrative staff to make use of telecommunications to explore educational topics, conduct research, and contact others in the educational world. The Board anticipates that the new systems will expedite the sharing of effective practices and lessons across the District and the forming of partnerships with others across the nation and around the world.

Communication over networks should not be considered private. Network supervision and maintenance may require review and inspection of directories or messages. Privacy in these communications is not guaranteed. The District reserves the right to access stored records in cases where there is reasonable cause to expect wrongdoing or misuse of the system. Courts have ruled that old messages may be subpoenaed; administrative staff and the Network Engineer may examine communications in order to ascertain compliance with network guidelines for acceptable use.

The Board directs the Superintendent to specify those behaviors, which are permitted, and those, which are not permitted, as well as appropriate procedures to guide employee use. In general, employees are expected to communicate in a professional manner consistent with state laws governing the behavior of school employees and with federal laws governing copyrights. Electronic mail and telecommunications are not to be utilized to share confidential information about students or other employees.

The Board generally supports access by students to information resources along with the development by staff of appropriate skills to analyze and evaluate such resources.

Students are responsible for good behavior on school computer networks just as they are in a classroom or a school hallway. Communications on the network are often public in nature. The network is provided for students and staff to conduct research and communicate with others. Access to network services will be provided to students who agree to act in a considerate and responsible manner. General school rules for behavior and communications apply.

The Board believes that the benefits gained with the students' and staff's ability to access the Internet and electronic mail, exceed the disadvantages. But ultimately, parents and guardians of minors are responsible for setting and conveying the standards that their children should follow when using media and information sources. To that end, the Holmdel Township Public Schools support and respect each family's right to decide whether or not to apply for Internet access.

Independent student use of telecommunications and electronic information resources will be permitted unless a letter from the student's parent or guardian to the building principal denies this access. Students denied access by their parents/guardians will be provided with alternate resources to acquire information and suffer no penalty in grades.

